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IBN EZRA IN ENGLAND.

ABRAHAM BEN MEIR IBN EZRA is one of the Jewish scholars that visited this island in the twelfth century. His name is not met with in commercial records (Sh'taroth), or in any other annals of the business transactions of contemporary Jews. He might have said in the words of the prophet, with a little variation, "I have not borrowed nor lent money, and yet will my people remember me for many generations." It is a rich legacy that Ibn Ezra left—even an *embarras de richesse*. It is difficult to assign to each of his numerous writings its exact date, place, and purpose; but however interesting the discussion and solution of these problems may be, they do not concern us here, as we have only to deal at present with a visit paid by this famous scholar to England, and with the works that he produced while he stayed in this country.

As to the life of Ibn Ezra, I have written what I had to say in a paper read before the Jews' College Literary Society, in the year 1872, and published by the Jewish Association for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge in one of the Sabbath Readings¹. A short biography of Ibn Ezra also precedes my *Translation of Ibn Ezra's Commentary on Isaiah*. But there is one point that is not yet cleared up. When did Ibn Ezra come to England? What kind of public or private reception was arranged for him? When did he leave England? I am sorry to say that I am perfectly ignorant on these matters; the Jewish annals seem to have passed over these questions with silence—perhaps a just

¹ It is to be regretted that these publications were discontinued, and it is to be hoped that they will be resumed under the auspices of the successor of the Association.

retribution to this scholar. History herein pays him measure for measure, for the study of geography and history were not treated by Ibn Ezra with due respect; in the curriculum of studies recommended by him they occupy an inferior position¹. According to his own statements, he was in Rome in 1140; he was in Lucca in 1145; in the years which follow he visited various places in Italy, and wrote Grammars and Commentaries, without giving place and date of the compositions. From Italy he went to France; the earliest work written there is the *Commentary on Exodus*, 1153, the latest is the *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, written in the year 1157². In the month of Tammuz, 1158, he was in London, and began to write the *Yesod Mora*. This is the first mention of Ibn Ezra's stay in London, but it is within the bounds of possibility that this was not his first visit. Negative evidence is inconclusive. At all events the *Yesod Mora* is the first work known to us which Ibn Ezra produced in England, directly for the benefit of a pious patron residing in this country.

Let us now hear what Ibn Ezra has to say about this book, and in it. The title is—

I. *Yesod Mora vesod Torah*³.

"The foundation of the fear of God and the essence of the Torah." Ibn Ezra wrote for a Maecenas who had studied

¹ Comp. *Yesod Mora*, ch. i: "The knowledge of the names of the towns in Palestine, the history of the Judges and the Kings, the building of the first Temple, that of the future Temple, or the prophecies that have already been fulfilled, can only be acquired by hard work and is of little benefit."

² See *Essays on Ibn Ezra* by M. Friedländer, p. 195.

³ This title is mentioned in the superscription; but I doubt whether it is Ibn Ezra's choice. The title is probably taken from the following sentence that occurs in the first chapter: "The knowledge of Hebrew Grammar enables us to understand יסוד המורא וסוד המורה 'The foundation of the Law and the essence (lit. secret) of the fear of God.'" Although the two terms סוד and יסוד are employed here as synonyms, the originator of the title thought it necessary to interchange them, so as to apply סוד to Torah in accordance with the use of the word by Ibn Ezra in his Commen-

under his direction other works composed by the same author¹. Ibn Ezra "took the trouble to write a book for him, on the divine precepts, because he had found him to be a truthful and godfearing man above many." The name of this pupil is not mentioned here², but the fact that Ibn Ezra had written other books for his pupil, which the latter studied in the presence of Ibn Ezra, suggests the name of Joseph of Maudville, the same who states in a postscript to Ibn Ezra's *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*: "I, Joseph, son of Rabbi Jacob of Maudville, copied it from the original autograph of the author, and added such remarks as I heard him make viva voce, when I was with him." Here Ibn Ezra calls his pupil *nadibh*, "generous," and in one of his poems he attributes "generosity" (*nidh'bhath rua'h*) to this same Rabbi Joseph. The book "was commenced in London, in the island Angleterre, in the month of Tammuz, and finished, after four weeks, in the month of Ab, 4918 (1158)³." Although it is not said that

taries. The correct title is probably that given in MS. Poc. 296, viz. ספר המצות "On the Divine Commandments." Comp. end of ch. i: "And now I will continue to speak on the Commandments," and again in ch. ii: "I took the trouble to write for him a book on the Commandments (ספר במצות)."

¹ This statement suggests either that Ibn Ezra had already been staying in England for some months, or that he came to England together with his disciple.

² In several MSS. the dedicatory poem has the following additional line:—

אודה בהשלימי לאל ולירדו ירחק בנו יעקב על מחנת ירו

"When I finish it I shall give thanks to God, and to his beloved, Joseph son of Jacob, for his support."

³ A postscript to the book runs (see *Orient*, XI, p. 301): "I, Abraham, the Sefardi, son of Meir, called Ibn Ezra, commenced to write this book in London, in the island Angleterre; and it was finished in the month of Ab, after four weeks, in the year 4919." In the book itself the name of London is not given, nor is the date mentioned. But when the author says: "Between Jerusalem and this island there is a difference of four hours as regards the time of sunrise," he probably meant between Jerusalem and England. He does not state on what authority he assumed a difference of four hours. The difference in degrees of longitude is only 35°, causing a difference of two hours twenty minutes. On the

the book was finished in London this was probably the case, as, according to Ibn Ezra's own statement, he was in London five months later, in the month of Tebeth, 4919, if this statement is not altogether a fiction.

The *Yesod Mora* is not quoted in any of the works of Ibn Ezra. On the other hand it contains references to the Commentaries on Exodus (short edition), Leviticus, Psalms, and Daniel. The following is an abstract of the contents of the book :—

In the Preface Ibn Ezra reminds the reader that man is distinguished from the rest of the creation by his intellect, by the spirit that comes from God and returns again to him when man has faithfully fulfilled his mission, viz. to study the works of his Master, and to live in accordance with his precepts. The acquisition of knowledge, of whatever kind, is a step upwards towards the knowledge of the Most High. The author then proceeds, in the first chapter, to recommend certain branches of learning as auxiliary knowledge, as means for an end, but which must not be treated as the aim of man's life. Such are the study of Masora and Grammar, the Bible, Talmud, Casuistry, and Midrash. When studying these things man must never lose sight of our principal aim, "to obtain a knowledge of the works and the will of the Creator;" and in order to attain this end, he must add to the above studies Natural Philosophy, Logic, Mathematics, Astronomy, and Psychology.

Logic, Ibn Ezra says in the next chapter, enables us to define and to arrange things properly by correct classification; and in the study of the Torah logic leads us to distinguish correctly between general principles and those individual precepts that emanate from them, and between the real precept and the fence round it. Incidentally¹ he

shortest day the number given by Ibn Ezra may approximately be right, if we take into account the difference in the length of the day, at least for the shortest day.

¹ So it seems; but it is possible that the rejection of such compositions as the *Acharoth* (a rhymed enumeration of the 613 precepts) is an essential

censures the authors of *azharoth*, who enumerate the 613 precepts without being guided by these logical rules—counting identical precepts each separately, and general principles side by side with the detailed precepts contained in the former.

The importance of these general principles shows itself in many ways. If they collide with certain individual precepts the latter are set aside. Only in three cases is the neglect of a positive precept (מצוה עשה) visited with *kareth*, and one of these is the neglect of a positive general principle (ch. iii)¹.

The general principles are easily distinguished from the rest, which are dependent on time, place, and circumstances (ch. iv), whilst the former are in force everywhere, at every time, and under all circumstances. They are implanted in man's heart; and the psalmist's praise of "the commandments² of the Lord, which are upright, making the heart glad" (Ps. xix. 8), applies especially to them (ch. v). The precepts are in part fully explained in the Torah, partly they are only indicated there, and are fully described in the Oral Law; there are also precepts which originated altogether in post-biblical times (ch. vi): all these may be divided into such as concern our actions, such as concern our words, and such as concern our thoughts or our heart (אמונת הלב). The latter must accompany every performance of a precept, without them the practice of the precept (מצוה) is meaning-

point in this work of Ibn Ezra. He may have been asked by his pupil to write for him a kind of *Azharoth*; but Ibn Ezra refuses to do so, exhorting his pupil to remember the general principles and to have constantly the chief aim of man's perfection before him; he might then dispense with a minute study of the individual precepts.

¹ Neglect of positive commandments is threatened with *kareth* only in the case of circumcision and the passover-offering. Ibn Ezra seems to consider the term ארר "cursed be" as identical with *kareth*, and explains Deut. xxvii. 26 to refer to him who neglects to conceive the earnest resolve in the heart to be loyal to the Torah.

² The Hebrew term is פקדים, and according to Ibn Ezra the word is derived from פקד "to entrust" (comp. פקדון "trust"), and signifies the things entrusted to the heart.

less. The source of all the general principles is the fear of the Lord, which inspires us with the desire to abstain from that which is prohibited and to do that which is commanded. From another point of view Ibn Ezra considers loyalty to the words, "the Lord thy God thou shalt fear" (Deut. vi. 13), as the source of man's obedience to the divine prohibitions (מצוות לא תעשה), and the first step towards his perfection, whilst man's obedience to the positive precepts (מצוות עשה), which are comprehended in the words "and him thou shalt serve" (ibid.), leads him gradually towards the highest degree of man's perfection, i.e. the love of God or the cleaving to him (רבקות בשם יתברך). When this degree is reached, man's soul will in his life-time "be filled with the fullness of joys in his presence," and will eternally enjoy the "pleasures for evermore at the right hand of God" (Ps. xvi. 11). Although man's physical constitution greatly influences his moral disposition, strict obedience to the divine precepts minimizes that influence, so that his perfection does not depend on a predestined order of things, but on man's own free will, in accordance with the Talmudical saying, "Everything is in the hands of heaven, except the fear of the Lord" (ch. vii).

How the single precepts affect man's moral faculty is not clear in every case; but in many cases the reason for the precept is stated in the Law. But whether the reason of the precept is clear to us or not, strict obedience is demanded in every case, the divine commandments being just "statutes and commandments" making the "people wise and reasonable" (Deut. iv. 6, 8) (ch. viii).

There exists, according to Ibn Ezra, a certain analogy¹ between the Kosmos and some of the divine precepts (ch. ix). Such analogy suggests a thorough study of the Kosmos, and such study leads to a knowledge and love of God. But in order to attain to this end, it is necessary for man to abandon earthly pleasures, and to devote himself

¹ Ibn Ezra frequently refers to that analogy in his *Commentary on the Pentateuch*. Comp. *Comm. on Exodus* xxv. 40, xxvi. 18, xxviii. 8.

exclusively to the service of God, every one according to his faculties' (ch. x).

Other mystical relations are pointed out in the eleventh chapter between the properties of the four letters of the divine name, the Tetragrammaton¹, and various mathematical and astronomical problems. He whose soul is filled with the knowledge of mathematics and astronomy advances greatly towards a knowledge of the divine Being, and secures for it eternal existence, becomes like the angels² who minister unto God, and sings praises to him together with his angels.

Not long after the *Yesod Mora*, Ibn Ezra is said to have written in England another essay, *The Letter of Sabbath*:

Iggereth hashshabbath.

The personification of the Sabbath is frequently met with in Hebrew literature. In the well-known hymn of the Friday evening service, beginning לְבָנָה וְיָרֵי, Sabbath is welcomed as a bride; in the *zemiroth*, Sabbath is introduced as a queen; in the Sabbath morning service, Sabbath is the author of Psalm xcii, for "the seventh day praises and sings 'a psalm, a song of the day of the Sabbath.'" In the same way Ibn Ezra introduces here Sabbath as the writer of a letter. In this letter, which is addressed to Ibn Ezra, Sabbath presents herself as the crown of the religion of the distinguished people, which occupies the fourth place in the Decalogue, and is "the sign of an everlasting covenant between God and his children." She is proud that she brings the blessing of rest to all who sanctify the seventh

¹ Comp. *Sepher hashshem*; and *Comm. on Exodus* iii. 15.

² It seems that Ibn Ezra thought of the ideal reconstruction of the Kosmos in the scholar's mind, and compared this construction with that of the real Kosmos by the angels, spiritual beings, created, according to Ibn Ezra, for the purpose of forming and ruling the universe, so that to some extent these angels are the same as the forces that act in nature, and are in their combined action identical with the Demiourgos of Philo. In Hebrew they are called *elohim*, which term, by way of metonymy, signifies also "God."

day, and feels satisfied with the way she has hitherto been honoured. But a change has recently taken place in the conduct of Ibn Ezra, of which she bitterly complains, and that is the chief object of her letter. Ibn Ezra, who has in his younger days always been a strict observer of the Sabbath, has become lax in his old age; for he allows books to remain in his house in which the profanation of the eve of Sabbath is suggested, and does not at once write letters to all congregations in order to show them the error of that suggestion.

Ibn Ezra tells us that one Friday evening (the 14th of Tebeth, 4919), when he happened to be in England, "in one of the cities of the island called 'the corner of the earth' (Angleterre), and forming part of the seventh zone," he had a dream, in which a letter from Sabbath was brought to him. His attention was called to books which were left by his pupils in his house, and which contained a heterodox interpretation of Genesis i. 5. He soon found the *corpus delicti*: it was a note on Genesis i. 5, which verse was explained to mean: It was evening and it was morning, and then one day had passed; for the night is counted with the preceding day. The first day must consequently have commenced in the morning and ended the next morning. It being admitted by all commentators, says Ibn Ezra, that the object of the biblical account of the creation is to explain the institution of Sabbath, the suggestion would not be unreasonable, that the beginning and end of the Sabbath should be determined in accordance with this account¹. Ibn Ezra's indignation would almost have induced him to destroy the book at once, even on the Sabbath, in order to prevent others from being misled by

¹ If the Commentary referred to were that of Rashbam, it would not have been necessary for Ibn Ezra to show the inference that readers might draw as regards the observance of the Sabbath; it is clearly stated in the Commentary itself: "And it was evening and it was morning (i.e. dawn commenced) and thus one of the six days referred to in the decalogue ended." If Ibn Ezra had seen this Commentary, he would have quoted these words. See below.

it. Reason, however, conquered passion, and Ibn Ezra contented himself with a solemn vow to write on the subject immediately after the Sabbath, and with the utterance of a curse against any one who would accept that explanation, or would read it aloud, or would copy it and enter it into a commentary on the Torah.

Whose Commentary was it that was thus condemned by Ibn Ezra? If the author's name was known to Ibn Ezra, why does he not mention it? Did he purposely withhold the name, because he feared lest the wrong comment be, to some extent, sanctioned by the great authority of the commentator? Or did he perhaps avoid offending an author that was generally respected? Graetz (*Geschichte der Juden*, VI, p. 447, note 8) believes that the Commentary of Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (רשב"ם) on the Pentateuch was meant, and, in fact, the impugned remark on Genesis i. 5 is found in that Commentary. If this view is correct, we can well understand the fear of Ibn Ezra that the force of his own arguments might be counterbalanced by the piety and learning of Rashbam. But why does Ibn Ezra employ the plural form "books" (ספרים), "commentaries" (פירושי התורה)? and why are the disciples introduced as having brought them into the house of their master? Furthermore, the various ways in which Genesis i. 5 was explained by different authors were not unknown to Ibn Ezra. In his commentary on Exodus xvi. 22, as well as in his remark on Genesis i. 5, he criticizes the impugned interpretation of Genesis i. 5. The shock which he says he received at the sight of it must have been caused rather by the circumstances connected with the copy found in his house than with its contents. It seems that the disciples had brought to their master for revision copies of explanations of biblical passages, in which the master found, to his great surprise, the very interpretation of Genesis i. 5 which he had always opposed. The Commentary of Rashbam could not have shocked him greatly, as a few lines' more reading would have convinced him of this Rabbi's loyalty to the tradi-

tional interpretation of the Biblical precepts. He says distinctly (on Genesis i. 14), "The time from one appearance of the stars (צאת הכוכבים) to the next is called one day¹," so that no one could honestly charge him with heterodox views concerning the beginning of the Sabbath. But for the disciples who, in spite of their master's strong opposition, copied the interpretation quoted above, it might prove dangerous as regards the right observance of the Sabbath. Hence the indignation of Ibn Ezra².

The account of the dream, and the resolve of Ibn Ezra to write the "letter" (אגרת) concerning the Sabbath, seems to have been written sometime after the event, and somewhere far from England. If the letter were written in England he would not have said, "in one of the towns of the island called Angleterre," but "in one of the towns of this island," and would probably have named the place; nor would he have further described the island as situated in the seventh zone³.

I doubt whether the whole account of the dream, which is intended as a poetical introduction to the three essays on

¹ It is difficult to see how this dictum can be reconciled with the quoted interpretation of, "And it was evening," &c. We must either assume that the Rabbi only intended to define the *length* of the day as consisting of twenty-four hours, and did not intend to fix the *beginning* of the day; and this explanation is supported by the fact that the important sentence, "The night is counted with the preceding day," quoted by Ibn Ezra, is absent from the Commentary ascribed to Rashbam. Or we must assume that this Commentary is a compilation of notes from various books, and was not written by Rashbam, or that either of the two contradictory explanations was interpolated.

² Abraham ibn 'Hiya ha-nasi, in his *Sefer ha-'ibbur* (I, ch. ix), says that the Christians count the days from the morning, and support their theory by pointing to passages in the Bible in which the day is mentioned before the night, and especially to the fact that light was first created. Also Ibn Ezra seems to ascribe this view to the Christians; for he fears "Lest we become a mockery in the eyes of the Christians" (by adopting the impugned explanation of Genesis i. 5 and yet beginning Sabbath in the evening). Discussions on the subject must frequently have taken place between Jews and Christians.

³ Note especially the phrase: 'ואני הייתי בעיר אחת מערי האי וגי'.

the beginning of the year, of the month and of the days, was written by Ibn Ezra himself. Some of the ideas contained therein seem to be foreign to the spirit of Ibn Ezra. This scholar does not at all lay stress on the use of wine for *kiddush* and *habhdalah*¹, as is done in this introduction. Ibn Ezra does not believe that the Sabbath is a day of rest for the dead more than any other day; his idea of the future life of our soul is entirely different². The three essays themselves are by no means new; they are a modified and expanded form of notes occurring in Ibn Ezra's *Commentary on the Pentateuch*³. Ibn Ezra himself may have recast them, but it is also possible that one of his pupils wrote them in the name of the master; and the principal object of these essays may have been the same as described in the Introduction, viz. to refute, in the fullest possible way, the above-mentioned heterodox interpretation of Genesis i. 5. The title given to the three essays is *Iggereth hashshabbath*, in a double sense of the word *Iggereth*, as the author states. First, it signifies a *collection* (from אָגַר "to collect") of arguments for the right observance of the Sabbath, and secondly, it reminds the reader of "the letter of Sabbath" that gave the impulse to these essays. From this statement we might infer that the original sense of the title was "a collection of arguments concerning the Sabbath," and that the term *iggereth* suggested the idea of "the letter of Sabbath"⁴.

The three essays are preceded by a few preliminary remarks on the connexion that exists between the course of the sun and the various seasons of the day and of the year.

Ibn Ezra then proceeds, in the first essay, to show that the

¹ Comp. *Yesod Mora*, ch. ii.

² *Ibid.*, Introd. and ch. x.

³ See Comm. of Ibn Ezra on Exodus xii. 2 and on Genesis i. 5.

⁴ The title *Iggereth* was suggested in the letter of Sabbath; comp. 'Why do you not at once vow that you would write letters in defence of our faith?' In this postscript Ibn Ezra seems altogether to ignore the poetical introduction; and the second explanation of the title is probably a later interpolation.

year of the Torah (שנת החוריה) begins in the spring, in the month *Abib*, which is "the first of the months of the year." An exception is made with regard to the year of release (שמיטה) and with that of jubilee (יובל), which commence in the autumn in the month of Tishri. In the second essay the beginning of the month is explained as depending on the first reappearance of the moon after the conjunction. The year is called in Hebrew *shanah*, because in every year the course of the sun through the ecliptic is repeated without any change, whilst the light of the moon is renewed every month, and a month is therefore called in Hebrew '*hodesh*, "renewal." If the term "month" is applied to the twelfth part of a solar year the name is borrowed from the lunar month, which is almost equal in length; in the same way we give the name "year" to twelve revolutions of the moon, because the period of twelve revolutions of the moon is nearly equal to a solar year. The Jewish Calendar is based on a combination of both systems, on account of the month *Abib*, which is to be the first month and must be in the spring. Taking the length of the solar year to be 365 days 5 hours 55 m. $45\frac{2}{3}\frac{5}{7}$ s., and the length of a month to be 29 days $12\frac{7}{10}\frac{9}{80}$ hours, 19 solar years are equal to 235 lunar months.

In the third essay Ibn Ezra approaches the chief question, the beginning of the day. The annual course of the sun, the ecliptic, is divided into four parts; the four points of division are the two points of intersection of the ecliptic with the equator, and the two points midway between the former. Similarly is the day circle of the sun divided into four parts by its two points of intersection with the horizon, and two points of intersection with the meridian, midway between the former. The four points in the ecliptic mark the beginnings (תקופות)¹ of the seasons of the year—spring,

¹ There are two kinds of *ʿukufoth*, those of R. Samuel and those of R. Ada; the former are based on the theory that the length of a year is $365\frac{1}{4}$ days; according to R. Ada 19 solar years are equal to 235 lunar months. Incidentally Ibn Ezra blames those that still continue to notice

summer, autumn, and winter; and the points of division in the day circle of the sun mark the beginnings of the four seasons of the day—sunrise, noon, sunset, and midnight. Just as each of the four beginnings of the seasons of the year has found its advocates for its selection as the beginning of the year¹, so also has each of the four moments of the day found its supporters that fixed it as the beginning of the day². As the autumn has been fixed by the *Torah* as the beginning of the *year* of rest (שבת), so is the evening, which corresponds in its properties to the autumn, the beginning of the *day* of rest.

Ibn Ezra then proceeds to criticize the various biblical passages that have been adduced in support of the theory that Sabbath begins in the morning, such as Exodus xvi. 23–25³. Chief among these passages is Genesis i. 1–5, which, according to Ibn Ezra, is the source of the dissension about the beginning of the Sabbath. His opponents hold that “the light” was the first object of the creation, and explain the passage thus: In the beginning, when God created heaven and earth, the earth was not in existence (*tohu va-bohu*) and darkness was (i.e. there was no light), &c. Consequently day came first in the Creation, and then followed night. Ibn Ezra rejects this interpretation, and explains the first paragraph of Genesis thus: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (i.e. the whole universe); but the earth was not as we see it at present; it was *tohu va-bohu*, empty, without living beings; and *darkness* was there, &c.; darkness consequently preceded the creation of light, and night was before the day. This interpretation of Genesis i. 1–5 fully

the *t'kufoth* of R. Samuel, and especially those who superstitiously ascribe to them certain influences.

¹ The Greeks (ἡῆρες) count the years from the spring, the Persians from the summer, the Chaldees from the autumn, and the Christians from the winter. (*Igg. hashshabbath*, ch. i.)

² Astronomers start from midnight or midday, when the sun passes through the meridian; Christians begin the day with sunrise, and we begin with sunset. (*Sefer ha-ibbur*, I, ch. x.)

³ Other passages are found in *Sefer ha-ibbur*, l. c.

agrees in sense and in expression with the latest (French) recension of Ibn Ezra's *Commentary on the Pentateuch*, extant on the first seventeen chapters of Genesis¹. It is remarkable that in the *Iggereth hashshabbath* references occur to the commentaries on Isaiah and on Daniel, but the *Commentary on the Pentateuch* is never quoted. The reason for this circumstance is probably this: the arguments given in the earlier recensions were not considered satisfactory by those for whom they were chiefly intended, and the new recension was still fragmentary and unpublished. In the present letter Ibn Ezra sought, by fresh arguments, to defend the traditional law of Sabbath from the attacks of the heterodox, the מניין² who rejected the theory that the day began in the evening.

It seems that our author has not yet exhausted all his store of arguments, for he adds, in conclusion, "This letter has been finished in haste," and thereby implies that in case of emergency he might produce further arguments. He does not give any reason for the haste, nor does he tell us in how far there was *periculum in morâ*.

A story-book in Judaic-German (מעשה בן) contains an account of Ibn Ezra's dream, but substitutes "Arnon" or "Aragon" for "Angleterre."

Besides these two compositions, Ibn Ezra does not seem to have produced any further work in England; but the result of his teaching may be noticed in the literary attempts of his pupil Joseph ben Jacob of Maudville (ממורדיל), who wrote notes on the Sidra, ויחי³, and added

¹ See *Essays on Ibn Ezra* by M. Friedländer, p. 160, and Appendix, p. 10 sqq.

² Ibn Ezra designates by this term a Jewish sect, that observed the Sabbath from morning to morning; we do not know whether there were such Jews in England or France in the time of Ibn Ezra. Dr. Gaster called my attention to the fact mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela that they existed among the Jews of Cyprus. (*Travels of Benjamin of Tudela*, I, p. 25 (Hebrew) and 57 (English), ed. A. Asher, and note 119, vol. II, p. 56).

³ *Essays on Ibn Ezra*, &c., p. 204, and Appendix, p. 65.

some explanatory remarks to Ibn Ezra's Commentaries on Exodus and on the Minor Prophets¹.

Ibn Ezra continued to live after the date mentioned in the *Iggereth hashshabbath* about ten years; but the question where he lived these years, and where he died, has not yet been satisfactorily settled. In the year 1161 Ibn Ezra was in Narbonne, where he calculated the nativity of a child². There is no trace that he returned after that to England, but there is a story³ that he died in England, surrounded by *shedim* in the form of black dogs. A traveller coming from England brought the story to Moses Tachau of Vienna. Moses Tachau, an ardent opponent of Ibn Ezra's writings, was only too glad to hear stories of this kind about Ibn Ezra, and the traveller probably knew it; and, according to the rule *הרועה לשקר ירחיק ערותו*, the name of England was connected with the story.

Ibn Ezra died seventy-five years old, and the words "Abram was seventy-five years old when he left 'Haran'" (i.e. the troubles of this world) were applied to him, according to some writers, by himself when he felt the approach of death⁴. Others ascribe to him the following words, uttered before his death, and containing sentiments which are more congenial to the spirit of Ibn Ezra: "My soul rejoices in the rock of my strength; in his might he bestowed benefits on me according to my righteousness; in his kindness he has taught me his ways, and kept me alive till I knew the object of my longing; and if my flesh and my heart is spent, the Lord remains my rock and my strength."

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¹ *Essays on Ibn Ezra*, &c., p. 155, note 2, and p. 166.

² See Steinschneider, *Shene ha-meoroth*, p. 4.

³ See *Ozar Nechmad*, vol. III, 97.

⁴ See *Anecdota Oxoniensia*, Semitic Series, vol. I, part 4, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, edited by Dr. A. Neubauer, p. 131.